

A NOTE ON THE STATUS OF
SIDALCEA CAMPESTRIS GREENE (MALVACEAE)

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Sidalcea campestris Greene is an endemic of the Willamette Valley of western Oregon (Hitchcock, 1957). Hitchcock and Cronquist (1961) state that the species occurs from Portland, Oregon, southward, and is found in dry fields and along roadsides. Sidalcea campestris is an herbaceous perennial up to 2 m tall and can be recognized by the paleness of its flowers, which range from almost white to pale lavender to pale pink to rarely dark pink.

The species is currently listed by the Fish and Wildlife Service (1985) as a Category 2 plant. Ayensu and DeFilipps (1978) considered it to be endangered. Siddall et al. (1979) write that Sidalcea campestris was once a common Willamette Valley dry prairie endemic. According to them, it now survives along fencerows and roadsides and, although it is still locally common in the Salem area, it has disappeared from much of the rest of the Willamette Valley. They recommend that it be considered endangered (Sidadall, et al., 1979). Meinke (1982) also states that the species is now primarily found in the central portion of its range. The Oregon Natural Heritage Data Base (1985) has Sidalcea campestris on its list of taxa currently limited in abundance throughout its range, but currently stable. They consider the species to be local or limited enough to require monitoring of the populations.

Hitchcock and Cronquist (1961) write that Sidalcea campestris grows in dry fields, along roadsides, and in fencerows. Recent investigations in the Willamette Valley have shown this species to be very common in these habitats. Sidalcea campestris can be easily found growing along Interstate 5 between Wilsonville and Eugene, along State Route 99W from Newberg to Junction City, and along most secondary and tertiary roads in the Willamette Valley and, indeed, up into the foothills of the Coast Range. For example, during an intensive survey of western Yamhill County in 1985, it was found along every road traveled. Sidalcea campestris is abundant in fencerows and is a dominant member of the flora of

those areas -- places which are usually occupied by European weeds. In such places, *Sidalcea campestris* is commonly associated with *Festuca arundinacea* Schreb., *Dactylis glomerata* L., *Holcus lanata* L., *Daucus carota* L., *Vicia* spp., *Rubus* spp., and *Rosa* spp.

Sidalcea campestris is presently found from Multnomah County in the northern end of the Willamette Valley to Lane County in the south. During the summer of 1985, it was seen to be a major component of roadside vegetation in Yamhill, Marion, Polk, Linn and Benton Counties. There have also been recent sightings or collections of *Sidalcea campestris* in Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, and Lane Counties.

The habitat of *Sidalcea campestris* is one which is not endangered by human activities. The species grows most abundantly on roadsides and along cultivated field margins, both areas where it must certainly be exposed to some sort of periodic vegetation management practices. At a site in Beaverton, Oregon, it was found immediately adjacent to a sidewalk which was constructed within the past five years, yet the plants appeared vigorous and had not been apparently affected by the construction. Plants growing along Interstate 5 were in areas that are mowed at least annually, as were those along SR 99W and county roads.

The observations made in 1985 indicate that *Sidalcea campestris* is much more abundant in the Willamette Valley than has been reported. Its occurrence in habitats which support a weedy flora indicates that it is not in any way restricted to remnants of native vegetation. Its presence in areas such as roadsides and field margins show that it is tolerant of some human activity. We therefore recommend that the status of *Sidalcea campestris* be reviewed, and that it be either delisted or reduced to Category 3C on the Fish and Wildlife Service list.

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